

GRANNY

A Tale of Old Christmas

**By
"CUSHAG"**



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BY

“CUSHAG.”

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GRANNY.

A TALE OF OLD CHRISTMAS.

I THINK I am seein' her yet, an' hearin' the
purr of the wheel,
An' a power of silence on her—but always
doin' a deal.

Whatever was in to be done, it's done it mus' be
at herself,
For active she was surprisin' an' not to be laid on
the shelf.

Nor no such great age at her neither, an' all
her intellecks bright,
But takin' a wakeness at times since some-
thing come on her that night;
The childher was used to her ways an' Daa
would be houlin' his han',
An' whatever was on in the house, for a while
mus' come to a stan'.

For the wheel would be stoppin' sudden, an' a
brightness over her eyes,
As if there was light from Heaven come into
them urrov the skies,
For a while with her two han's folded, she seemed
to be takin' a prayer,
But never a word could she speak of what she
was seein' there.

Then the wheel would take on again an' beginnin'
giving the sof' an' low,
You'd hardly be hearin' it first but studdy the
tune would grow,
Till you'd think there was wans in singin' that
was larnt at the choirs above
An' your heart would be goin' a liftin' with
thoughts of peace an' love.

But now an' again she could speak—perhaps in
the mids' of the night
The tongue goin' a loosin' at her, an' tell of the
silver light,
“No need” she would say, “for the canngle, but
come you here an' sit,”
“An' I will be tellin' the story as I remember
it.”

In them days the people was thinkin' a dale of
the Christmas time,
An' goin' to spin or that would be took for a
sort of a crime.
I don't know are they godlier now—may be
they're not as good,
For all the talk they have got that's hard to be
understood."

So then on the Eve of St. Thomas, (Black Thomas
they're callin' him to,
The way he went back on the Masther—but I
needn't be tellin' you).
But still an' for all from that till Christmas was
past an' gone
The people was all to take holly, an' never no
work to be done.

An' I needn't be tellin' you that's eddicated so
high,
The change that was made in the days by let-
ting a handful slip by.
A quare thing too to be doin', but them that
was in had the powers,
An' its them that will have to answer for
meddlin' with days an' hours.

I was askin' Pazon to see was he thinkin' them
wans to blame,
With the quare bad years they were havin' an'
rumours of wars that came.
But, "Never you mind," he was sayin', "if others
is doin' crimes,
An' ill wans is raggin' an' teerin'—the times is
God's own times."

"An' never you fear" he was sayin', "the rain-
bow is showin' still,
The seasons is all in their places, an' good
comin' out of the ill.
There's peace in the worl' above where we
hope to meet one day;
An' spring-time an' harvest is comin' whatever
the almanacs say."

You'll think I was makin' free, but aw, he's
the chreestey-coar !
Wan of the rael oul' standards ! The like isn't
in no more.
An' always givin' a snog, whether lapped from
the couth in the brough'm
Or dhrivin' the gray in the gig, sittin' up like
a musheroom.

Well that's the way it is, but when it was first
begun,
It was awkward thremenjus at farms, an' the
harves' barely done;
An' the lil dark days themselves that was used
to be comin' first,
Goin' a leavin' all at the Saints, an' Christmas
in with a burst.

An' I'm thinkin' some of the oul' wans was
middlin' onaisy too,
An' keepin' the work put by an' not knowin'
what to do.
But Granny was wan of the surt that's terrible
rank for work,
An' even the hens in the yard was gettin' no
leave to shirk.

For goin' from mornin' till night, an' orderin'
masther an' man,
Or takin' a toss at her needle, an' could read
like an African;
An' over the street with the dawn, an' bakin'
an' brewin' the jough,
An' whippin' the chile, an' clappin' the dog,
an' sthrooghin' the pussy-bogh.

An' then when winter was on, the wheel would
 be goin' like steam,
An' Granny an' her would be singin' like pussy-
 bogh over the cream.
Aw deed, to the Sunday itself she was takin' a
 a bit of a spite,
Though regglar puttin' away by six of a
 Sattherday night.

Well, well ! When her man was took she failt
 for a year or more,
With the farm gone all through others, an'
 want lookin' in at the door.
The bees was annoyed with her too, an' lef'
 her wan by wan,
For some dis-cease come on them an' all her
 luck was gone.

Them bees is easy vexed when things is goin'
 wrong,
An' quick to miss their notice, an' terrible bad
 to long !
But Granny come to in time, for she would not
 be bet,
An' middlin' bare she kep' us till all was clear
 of debt.

Then us growin' up so fas' an' findin' places
roun',
She might have slacked a bit an' wore her
Sunday gown;
But takin' joy of her work as others is doin'
of play,
An'—"Lave her alone," said the boys,—"she's
boun' to have her way."

Aw well, its like you'll be tired an' me goin' on
like the thrain !
But Granny was Granny for all—an' is always
renewed up again.
So sit you up to the fire—the nights is growin'
coul',
An' see can I keep to the story when once I
am gettin' houl'.



"No need" she would say, "for the canngle,
but come you here an' sit."

Well Christmas was pas' we were thinkin', an'
 New Year come with a roar,
An' the couth of the winter upon us, with snow
 lyin' up for more.
Laa Giense was at us too, with dancin' an'
 legads an' all,
With the young folk lookin' for sweethearts,
 an' the oul' takin' res' by the wall.

An' a fine ball down we were havin', with some
 wans up from the Sous,
An' the childher rampin' an' rarin', from end to
 end of the house—
But Granny was goin' a frettin', an' wipin' the
 wheel with her brat,
An' givin' a twiss surrupshus, an' beatin' her
 foot pit-a-pat.

For longin' she was, the sowl, to be havin' us
 urrov the way,
That she would get room for her wheel, an'
 tired of their noisin' an' play.
An' "Christmas is pas'," she was sayin', "an'
 Hark the Harals is sung.
An' I want to be spinnin' the tred from the
 parcel of flax I brung."

Well the childher was tired at last, an' the mare
goin' a puttin' to
For the wans from the Sous to go home, an'
that was the end of the do.
An' turnin' back from the gate, with the light
sthreamin' out on the grass,
When—"Aw, look at Granny,"—says Daa,
"she's desperrt surely at las'."

For out in the mids of the flure she was
spinnin' as if she was dhruv,
An' only stoppin' a second to be givin' poor
Peggy a shove.
An'—"Well, she'll get lave," says Daa—"we'll
be goin' our ways to bed,
But I'm sorry for Peggy for all, for her eyes
is so heavy as lead."

• • • •

THE morning is very solemn with the darkness
coverin' roun'
An' the trees goin' wailin' mournful as they're
scutchin' up an' down.
An' the little sleepy stars that's watchin' while
you ress
Is winkin' at the candle-stick you've set upon the
press.

An' all the burden of the day is on your weary
mind
As down the stairs you stumble, not knowin'
what you'll find.
But with the kettle puttin' on an' firelight all
aglow,
The dear me heart how cheerful then, the worl'
is comin' to.

An' then among the bushes out you'll hear a
little cheep,
Some little feathered falla like that's wakin'
from his sleep.
An' sidin' in the house an' all, when next you
take a sight
The farm an' fields is sittin' theer an' every-
thing is right.

We're goin' a risin' early in the summer weather
too
With limbs that's tired aching with the work
that's got to do.
But summer dark is not no dark, an' jus' a
curtain drawn
For shadin' weary eyes a bit, an' liftin' with
the dawn.

I never had no need for all to let myself be
wore,
For Daa was thoughtful shockin', an' always
on before;
An' him it was i'stead of me that stumbled
down the stairs
An' falled, as deed he mostly did, among the
stools an' chairs.

"Tut, tut," I heard him say—an' then, the
splutter of a match,
An' with the canngle in his han' I heard the
parlour latch
Goin' lif', lif', liftin' very sof' as he looked in
to see
Was Granny sleepin' peaceful still or shoutin'
for her tea.

D'you min' these times you're thinkin' like that
 somethin's goin' wrong,
Some little soun' you're hearin' p'raps, then
 silence over long;
An' all your heart is jumpin' while your limbs
 are seemin' boun',
While everything that's in the house is goin'
 roun' an' roun'.

There's many a time that I would wait to hear
 if all was well,
For some of these that seem so smart is awful
 easy fell.
An' I often listened keerful until I heard them
 spake,
Or else the door a pullin' to if she was not
 awake.

So when Daa gave a little call, I felt a sudden
 fear,
An' hardly dared to look aroun', an' fainted
 very near.
For deed an' all our Granny lay as if she had
 been dead
Excep' her han's went to and fro like drawin'
 on the thread.

I touched her han', I smoothed her hair, that
 was so white an' sof',
The very cap was on her still, an' not a stitch
 took off.
Her blue, blue eyes were lookin' out as bright
 as polished steel,
An' all the while her han's went on as if to
 guide the wheel.

The day went by, the weeks went by, an winter
 near was gone,
An' still she lay, an' still she watched, an' still
 her hans' went on.
The Doctor come, an' Pazon come, an' "Give
 her time" they said,
An' sure through time she eased at last an'
 slep' upon her bed.

So then she brightened middlin' quick an' when
 the Summer came
Was goin', goin' like herself an' workin' jus'
 the same;
An' first an' last upon the flure, an' spinnin'
 at the wheel,
But that strange silence on her still of what
 had done the jeel.

An' then one night she called an' said:—“Now
come you here an' sit
That I can tell the story while I remember
it.”
An' me an' Daa we humoured her an' sat be-
side her theer
Although the night was wearin' fast an' morning
very near.

“Well, yondhar time,” that's what she said,
“When I was lef' alone,
I heard poor Peggy sighin' in with many a
weary moan.
An' still I kep' her at her wheel, I kep' her
from her bed,
Till sleep come on her suddenly, an' down she
laid her head;
So then I had the house alone, an' still the
wheel went roun',
Till bit by bit the fire fell in, an' shaddas comed
aroun'.

An' something scraped behin' the wall, an' seemed
ed to lif' a han'
An' touch me sof', an' frightened though, yet
still for all I span.
Then through the dark a snow white bird came
flying from the hill,
An' settled on the window ledge like resting
on the sill.
(The bird they call the 'Spyrid' to, straight like
the Holy Dove
You're seein' on the Churches up with wings
stretched out above),
She watched me through the window an' I
looked at her again;
But still I sent the wheel aroun' an' worked
with might an' main;
An' then, a little creepy light seemed flitterin'
on the wall,
It came an' went, an' puzzled too, I sat an' span
for all.
It came an' went, an' came again, an' like a
silver dew
It glistened on the quiggal then, but still the
tred I drew.
But now the light it frightened me, an' I was
all alone,
An' on the settle Peggy slep' with many a weary
groan.

Then fear began to come on me that I was doin'
sin,
For sure it mus' be Christmas now this Light
was bringin' in.
An' what if Coorts an' Almanacs have took an'
changed the day,
The Light that led the Shepherds on was knowin'
more than they.
The wheel itself was silver now an' all in rays
of light,
An' whiter than the flakes of snow the flax was
shinin' bright.
But Peggy's wheel was navar touched, good
servant-lass was she,
That only done what she was bid an' navar
answered me.

I feared almost to lif' a han' to touch her where
she lay,
But had her woke at las' for all to see what
she would say.
She looked at me an' at the wheel but she was
seein' nought,
An' then I knew that me it was the warning
message sought.

My han's fell idle in my lap, I tried to take a
prayer,
The Light was growin' whiter yet, more bright
than I could bear.
An' throubled sore, an' thremblin' all with coul'
an' fear an' dread
I crep', an' crep', away from theer, an' laid me
on my bed."

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So that was Granny's story, toul while she could
spake of it,
An' many a time again at night she'd call us
for a bit.
An' say "I'm spakin' now"—"I'm tellin' ye,"
she'd say,
"That so you'll know Oul' Chrissamus is real
Christmas Day."

An' when the autumn brought its storms, an'
sea-birds flew aroun'
She used to watch for yondhar wan to light
upon the groun'.
She knew the bird that watched that night would
come for her again,
An' still she sent the wheel aroun' an' worked
with might an' main.



“ My han’s fell idle in my lap,
I tried to take a Prayer.”

But mostly she was silent as she sat before the
wheel,
An' often dhramed a bit at times—but always
doin' a deal.
An' then the wheel would sudden stop an' her
two han's would lie,
An' light that came from far away come on her
from the sky.

The winter foun' her failin' though, yet still
when at her bes'.
The wheel was goin' whistlin' roun',—but longer
takin' ress.
An' oftener in the everin' her han's was lyin'
quite.
An' watchin', so the childher said, for yondhar
bird to light.

An' when Old Christmas came again, upon the
very day,
Her blue, blue eyes were fadin' fas' like skies
at everin' gray.
Then through the dark a Spyrrid came an'
settled here till morn,
An' well we knew our Granny's soul would go
with her at dawn.

An' so it was—when mornin' broke, an' birds
began to cheep,
An' farm an' fields shone clear again like waking
from their sleep.
The Spyrid spread her wings an' flew to meet
the rising day,
An' Granny took her ress at last, an' peaceful
passed away.



